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A  
Thanksgiving SERMON

FOR  
His Majesty's Safe Return,  
AND FOR  
The Happy and Honourable PEACE,  
Of which GOD has made Him the Glorious Instrument.

PREACHED  
In *Highbate Chapel*, on *Thursday* the 2d.  
of *December*, 1697.

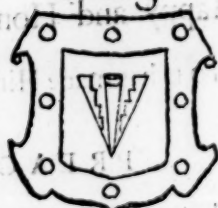
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By R. L. V. A. L.

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L O N D O N,  
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Lord Crewe's  
Charity



Durham, England

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## The Prayer before Sermon.

**O** Blessed Lord God! who art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, working wonders. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment; and in the midst of judgment remembrest mercy. To thee alone we ascribe the Glory of our many Deliverances: This Church and Nation have been the visible care of thy providence and protection. We therefore praise thee, O God! We acknowledge thee to be our Saviour and Deliverer! Thou only causest Wars to cease in the Earth; and in great mercy hast put a stop to the Effusion of Christian Blood; thou heardest the voice of our humble petitions, and hast preserv'd thy dear Servant from all those Dangers and Deaths he has been exposed to for our sakes: Thou broughtest him back,

## The Prayer before Sermon.

O Lord, with the Triumphs and Glories of a Peace-maker. O fill our Hearts with thankfulness ; and in thy good time give repentance to all those who sit in darkness and error. Grant to us all a spirit of righteousness, peace, and concord, that we may become one Sheepfold under one Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. O that love, and union, piety, and charity, may abound amongst us, that we may become the joy of the whole Earth. O Lord, give thy Servant, our most rightful and lawful sovereign King William, a long Life, and happy Reign ; and let this be the praise and glory thereof, that therein the Righteous did flourish, and there was abundance of Peace. — This, and whatsoever else, thou, O God of thine infinite Goodness, &c.

Colof.



## Coloſſians III. 15.

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.*

**L**OVE and Gratitude can never fail of a Reward; Joy and Peace attend them in this World, Happineſs and Glory in that which is yet to come. They are juſt like the Cherubims, always ſmiling and looking kindly one upon another.

A readineſs and willingneſs to do all the good we can, a grateful reſentment of all the favours and benefits we have receiv'd from others, (which are Qualities of an endearing nature,) were the only Springs and Engines that mov'd and inclin'd me to undertake the Buſineſs of this Day. Had I the golden Mouth of *St. Chryſoſtom*, the Eloquence of *Cicero*, or the admirable Skill of *Orpheus*, I might then penetrate, or mollifie, or charm thoſe Mens Hearts which ſeem now to be as inflexible, I had almoſt ſaid as inſenſible, as the very Rocks and Stones.

Could

Could I now draw as lovely and lively a Description of all the Advantages of Peace and Union amongst our selves, as the Subject will bear, I might then convince Gainsayers, and bring those who seem to be discontented at the present Dispensations of Providence, to confess, that all our Dangers, our Troubles, our Miseries and Sorrows did at first spring and arise from the poison'd Fountain of our own unhappy Divisions. I beseech you therefore, in the Language of the Apostle, *let the peace of God rule in your hearts.* What! does the Apostle mention Peace! Methinks there's a pleasing Charm in that sweet Appellation! Peace is now become the delightful Theme of our daily Discourse, and the daily Object of our Joy and Gratitude.

Peace is the fairest Flower of a Prince's Crown, the choicest Blessing of a Nation; 'tis one of the most excellent Gifts of the Divine Bounty: It brings Relief to the Poor, Bread to the Hungry, Cloaths to the Naked, Business to the Diligent and Industrious; it invigorates the Body Politick; it sets all the Wheels and Engines of Trade, of Traffick, and Commerce, into a joyful Movement; and has folded up within her Arms all those Blessings which we poor Mortals can wish or desire.

God,

God, who governs the World, and disposes and orders all things for the Good of his Creatures, (which should give full Satisfaction to all Mankind,) has for eternal Reasons, which we shall all see and understand hereafter, given us a Prince, whose first Arrival gave new Life to our dying Hopes, and at once both rouz'd and rais'd the Courage of a sinking Nation.

His great Understanding, his indefatigable Toil and Labour, his undaunted Courage, and admirable Conduct, has, since that, not only lower'd, but levell'd the growing Pride and Power of a subtle, politick Enemy. And now, after all the thundering Storms, the frightful and amazing Tempests of War, he has crown'd this, and the neighbouring Kingdoms, with the brightest Diadem of this World's Felicity, a Firm and an Honourable Peace. Thus God has made this most illustrious Prince the Avenger of our Evils, the Repairer of our Breaches, and Restorer of our Blessings. For which the Children who are yet unborn, will one Day rise up, and call him Blessed.

And what shall the Fathers say, who have heard and seen all this! May all the Blessings of Heaven and Earth attend King *William* the Third, the  
best

best and greatest Monarch of the World : A Prince dear to Heaven, the Darling of Providence, born for the Good of Mankind, worthy in all Ages to bear the most exalted Triumphs of War, and the brightest Felicities of an eternal Peace. Great Favours are great Obligations, and so consequently should bind and engage us, for the time to come, to be more Obedient to God, more Loyal to our King, and more Charitable to our Neighbours ; more resolute in ceasing to do Evil, in learning to do well : This certainly is the best and only way of returning Thanks this Day to Almighty God.

God's present Mercies, and our own late Miseries, are such pressing and invincible Arguments, to persuade us to be Peaceable and Thankful, as none can be greater ; such a Power they have of exciting and moving us to take heed, that we fall not out amongst our selves, that we never forget nor over-look these signal Instances of the Divine Goodness, in delivering this Church and Nation from Popery and Slavery, as must needs render us infatuated, should we not labour to promote Peace and Union amongst our selves.

Let

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts ; rule in your Hearts, and make them unanimous ; in your Tongues, and make them thankful ; in your Hands, and make them charitable : Rule us all into one Mind, one Heart, and one Faith, that we may all with one Mouth glorifie and praise the God of our Salvation. This Peace of God we ought every way we can to be rul'd by it, and be thankful for it ; neither is our Vertue nor our Felicity compleat without it.

He is the best Christian that is most for Peace with his fellow Christian. This *Peace of God* must over-rule our Passions, advance and crown our Vertues, heal and decide our Controversies. Hast thou Faith ? Have it to thy self ; trouble neither thy weak , nor thy strong Brother about it ; do not censure or condemn thy Brother, because he is not just of the same mould and opinion with thy self ; but sit down, and be content, that thy Life, thy Liberty, the Law, and thy Religion, are all entirely preserved. Let not nice Distinctions and Opinions hatch and foment any Quarrels amongst us Christians ; but *let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called, in one body, and be ye thankful.*

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*A Thanksgiving Sermon,*

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In speaking to these Words, I shall apply my self to the Duty of this Day, and will enquire,

*First,* What is meant by this Expression,  
*Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.*

*Secondly,* What it is to be thankful.

*Peace* is a Word of a very large Extent ; all God's Blessings are folded up in that sweet Name : It signifies all the temporal, all the spiritual, and all the eternal Good we can either expect or desire.

Now that *Peace* which the Apostle here recommends, is such an one as is joined with Righteousness, with Truth, with Love, and Charity. If this *Peace rule in our Hearts*, it will decide all our Differences, compose all our Quarrels, and heal all our Wounds ; it will work us all into order, and make us cheerful under all its Commands, both to God and Man. Thus *let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts.*

Were it once but truly and sincerely fixed there, it would rule our Words into a milder key, and our Actions into a smoother dress.

We



We should hear no Whispers against the present auspicious Government of great *Cæsar*; no feigned Jealousies of a Commonwealth coming in; no talk of an absolute unbounded Monarchy; no canting of sad Times, when we must have seen and felt much worse, had not God himself interpos'd, rescu'd, and deliver'd us. It were much to be wish'd, that our Magistrates would take effectual Care, to suppress and hinder the printing of Libels, and all such Books, and Pamphlets, as tend to no other end, but to amuse the People, to dissuade them from admiring and adoring the best of Princes, to rail at the present Government, and keep them in perpetual Discontents, and hinder them from Reunion with the Church. These cannot be the Words of such as seek the Peace of *Sion*, or *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, or wish well to their native Country.

But if we stand upon Punctilio's, and will not pray but in our own Words; will not worship God, unless we may do it in what form we list our selves; will quit the Church, rather than our Humour, we cannot be said to further, but disturb the Peace both of Church and State.



The Apostle beseeches us, *Col. 3. 12, 13.* to be tender and compassionate, meek and humble, patient and long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving one another : *If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* O most admirable and divine Exhortation !

As if he had said, I assure you, my beloved *Colossians*, that these Vertues and Graces are the best Symptoms, and the best Expressions, of the *Peace of God ruling in your Hearts.*

The Looks of *Peace* are mild and chearful, her Words smooth and gentle, her Hands soft and merciful, always stretch'd out to receive and embrace those who are ready to come in. Now as we are to live peaceably one with another, so we are to be thankful for all those Blessings God hath bestowed upon this Church and People.

'Tis a Duty that now lies upon us ; for *it well becometh the Just to be thankful, Psal. 33. 1.* I cannot direct you to any thing more becoming us, in regard of the Mercies mentioned in the Text : *The Peace of God*, and the calling us to it *in one body.* Each of them so ample Subjects for our Gratitude, that we cannot  
shew

shew thankfulness enough for either. Peace Abroad and at Home too ! This is so great a Blessing, that no one thing is more pleasant to be seen, more beautiful to be desired, or more profitable to be enjoyed.

But what shall we say to those Remarkable Instances of God's Mercy and Goodness to us, in preserving this Church and Nation from the black Designs, and barbarous Conspiracies of bloody-minded Men.

On *November* the 5th. 92 Years ago, when the fatal Tragedy of the Gun-powder Treason was to be acted by the Papists ; all the black Scenes of Ruine, of Misery, and Death, being all fitted and prepared ; that then, when the Funeral of King and Parliament, of Church and State, was to be consummated in a fiery Cloud ; that then, when the fatal Minutes were hastening on to an amazing, dreadful Period : That God should at that moment of Time, when there was none could save or help us ; that he should come down to rescue and deliver us ! That he should infuriate and discover those desperate Wretches, and bring them all to Shame, and condign Punishment ! is a plain Instance of his Povidence, (which has hitherto

therto watch'd over us for Good) as well as a peculiar Token of his Love and Mercy. On the self-same Day, *November* the 5th. above 9 Years ago, when we look'd upon our selves as a miserable, enslaved Nation; our Liberties, our Laws, our Religion, being all perverted and invaded; that then, when we were beset with Legions of armed Papists, pick'd out of this and the neighbouring Kingdoms, ready to receive and execute the bloody Dictates of Priests and Jesuites; that then, when our Church and Religion were brought to the lowest ebb; lay languishing and sighing under the Oppression and Tyranny of her cruel Enemies, who tauntingly upbraided her with her Old Age: That God should then raise up her Head out of the Dust! That he should bring all the Plots and Contrivances of her Enemies to nought! That he should save *Israel* by the hand of his Servant *Moses*! That he should send the most Heroick and Renowned Prince of *Orange* to save and rescue us from a most cruel Tyranny, and bloody Persecution, is a Mercy thankfully to be commemorated by all such as love their Religion, their King, and Country.

God

God has called who were almost out of Call ; some in remote Corners of this Kingdom, some in foreign Countries abroad , some *incognito* in dark Corners at home ; some in Dungeons and Prisons , some in the Tower ! We are all like dead Men restored to a new Life ! God has called us again into his Church ; he has restored some to their Estates, some to their Wives and Children, from whom they were forc'd to fly ; not that they had done Evil, or deserved Death, but because they hated Idolatry, and were ready and able to discover the Actors and Inventors of all our Miseries and Troubles.

God has called us all to the Enjoyment of our Liberties, our Laws, and our Religion, he maketh our Wars to cease, and hath settled us upon the sure Foundations of an Honourable Peace. This is so transcendant a Mercy, that we can never be sufficiently thankful.

For Men to be grateful and thankful, is,  
*First*, Humbly and heartily to acknowledge God's infinite Goodness and Mercy to us, and our own infinite Unworthiness of it. He that thinks light of those Works and Wonders God has wrought for us ; he that knows not how to prize

prize that Peace and Prosperity we now enjoy, or thinks he did any thing to merit or deserve it, either understands not God's Goodness, or is not thankful for it.

*Secondly*, To be truly thankful, is openly and publickly to confess God's Mercies ; to reflect a while upon the Providence of God.

1. In delivering of this Kingdom from Popeny and Slavery.

2. In preserving His Majesty's most Sacred Person from the barbarous Conspiracies of bloody-minded Traitors ; and, from all the Perils, the Dangers, the various kinds of Deaths, he has for our sakes been exposed to. And then,

Lastly, With Raptures of Joy to dwell a while in the pleasant Contemplation of an Honourable Peace.

Much might be said of his Wisdom, his Valour, his Conduct, and particularly of his Clemency to his Enemies. These all deserve Hymns and Praises ; we ought to be telling them from Day to Day.

Again, To be thankful indeed, is to shew it by our Lives and Actions, to present our selves, and all that is ours, to the Service and Worship of God ; to offer up our Souls and Bodies, and  
what

what else is ours, as Peace-offerings, and Sacrifices of Thanksgiving ; never to fear we can do too much, never to hope we can do enough, for what God has done for us ; in thus reinstating us in our Religion, and in all other our Rights and Privileges.

He hath finish'd our Wars, and restored our most Rightful and Lawful King, with the Triumphs and Hosanna's of a Peace-maker. Blessed be he that thus cometh to us in the Name of the Lord ; be we thankful unto him, and let us speak good of his Name for ever and ever.

Thus much for those Words, *Let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts ; it follows, to the which ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful : We are called in one body, How ? By Signs and Wonders ; by a miraculous Power : Surely there wanted but a Step between Us and Death. All the Devices and Engines of our Enemies were all fitted, and almost finish'd ; ready (as they themselves boasted) either for our Conversion, or Confusion. Now we who should have suffered and dy'd, or have been murder'd for the same Cause, are thus unexpectedly delivered, and call'd into one body, let us study how*



to keep in one ; how to love, relieve, and assist each o'her. Among the Saints and Angels there are no Jarrs, or Discords ; Peace dwells for ever there : And seeing God has, of his infinite Mercy and Goodness call'd us to it, I hope we will bethink our selves, and walk worthy of it.

If we once fall into our old Divisions, our very Hopes of a Recovery of Peace and Union are lost in a moment.

If by falling into several Parties, we set open the Flood-gates to a Deluge of Misery and Confusion, it may justly be said of us, We did not understand the things that made for our Peace, but betray'd and ruin'd one another.

The Day-star of our Peace and Prosperity shines now from East to West, from North to South : Like Lightning in a moment of Time, Fame has wing'd great *William's* Name throughout the World.

Before his long wish'd-for Arrival here, above Nine Years ago, there was nothing but Scenes of Sorrow, of Slavery, and Death before our Eyes. Now that he is come, has repair'd our Breaches, scatter'd our Enemies, fought our Battels, and finish'd all with a glorious



rious Peace : See ! all things begin to spring and revive, to bloom and flourish afresh ! Nature puts on a pleasing Smile ! Even the dull and melancholy Soul looks gay and chearful ! Where ever this mighty Prince comes, how joyfully is he received ! how splendidly entertained ! The Eyes of all the World are now with admiration fix'd on him. See ! his Enemies are all struck with Fear and Terror, his Friends all transported with Joy and Wonder.

We are all now like Trees planted by the Rivers of Waters, which should bring forth their Fruits in due season : And will we, after all this, tear off our selves by pieces into more Confusions ? Who hath bewitched us, that we should think of doing this ?

If, after all this, we reflect a little upon our selves, how happily we were call'd, who a little before seem'd cast away ; call'd into one Protestant Church, detesting Superstition and Idolatry ; into one happy Government, abhorring all arbitrary Power, Oppression, and Tyranny ; called then, when we scarce had any Names, but Traitor, Heretick, or Rebel, to be call'd by. We Protestants were the inno-

cent Sheep, whom the Priests and Jesuites had mark'd out for Slavery or Death.

Indeed, to say the truth, we had by our Sins deserv'd to undergoe and suffer all that Misery that was then breaking in upon us. That God should, notwithstanding this, have Compassion upon us, who so little deserv'd it ! Oh ! what can we look upon this to be, but the calling us out of Dust and Death, to an anticipated Resurrection ?

Here we cannot choose but admire at the eternal Mercy and Goodness of God, crying out, *Lord ! what is man, that thou art mindful of him ?* Or what are we, that thou should'st thus rescue and deliver us ?

And can we so far forget our selves, as to unwind and unravel all our Happiness, by being divided again ? Does not the Mischiefs and Miseries we have already suffer'd, make us sensible of all the Arts and Contrivances the Papists have used, to exasperate and set us one against another ? Are the Companies of armed Roman Catholicks, of desperate bloody-minded Irish-men, so blessed a Sight within our Quarters and our Houses, that we now seem to murmur and complain ? If we are pleas'd  
with

with these things, why then God indeed has done us an Injury, to scatter and infatuate so dangerous an Enemy, to cease our Oppressions and Persecutions, to bring home Peace and Safety to our Doors; and we do as good as tell him thus, whilst we either run our selves into new Divisions, raise them or continue them. Oh how unthankful, miserably unthankful, must we needs be, as well as foolish and inconsiderate, if we thus contemn and throw away our Peace and Happiness!

And shall we add Ingratitude to the vast bulk of our other notorious Vices! O God forbid. And yet this we shall do, if we oppose that Peace and Happiness which Heaven it self now tenders and offers to us by the hand of our most gracious King. Now what can be more answerable to the Peace of God bestowed upon us with our Enemies abroad, than a firm bond of Peace and Union with our Brethren at home? He that returns not this, returns nothing to God for all that he has wrought and done for us.

*How can he be at Peace with God whom he has not seen, that will not be at Peace with his Brother whom he has seen? He that saith he loveth God,*  
*and*

*and hateth his Brother, is a Liar ; hereby shall all men know that ye are the Friends and Followers of Christ, if ye love one another.*

To draw to a Conclusion : The redeeming us out of Misery and Slavery, the scattering of our Enemies, the preservation of His Majesty's Sacred Person from all the Conspiracies, the Dangers, and Deaths he has been expos'd to at home and abroad, the happy End of the War, and the welcome Blessings of an Honourable Peace, these are all of no worth or value in our Judgments or Opinions, if we be not henceforth more Righteous towards God, more Loyal towards our King, and more Loving and Charitable one towards another, than ever we yet have been.

And now if ye have any respect to the Righteous Judge of all the World, if any Consideration of God's Goodness, if any Love to Unity, if any kind of Gratitude for the Mercies you have received from Heaven, or would be gracious in the Eyes of a merciful Father ; let the Meekness of Christians, the Endearments of God's Kindness, the Reasonableness of Gratitude, and the Hopes of God's Favour, engage us all, to the utmost of our Power, to  
promote

promote Peace, and Charity, and Union amongst our selves: And may that God who calls us to it, work it in us, that we may all with one Heart and one Mouth return him Thanks, *for his Mercy endureth for ever*; and let all the People sing with King David, *Bless ye the Lord, praise him, for his Mercy endureth for ever.* And let us now beg, that the God of Peace and Holiness would sanctifie every one of us in Body, Soul, and Spirit, that we may be kept blameless to the Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen, Amen.*

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F I N I S.